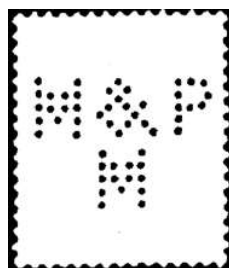


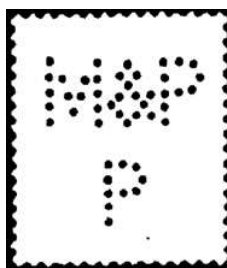
MATHER & PLATT LTD

Alan Randall Jones

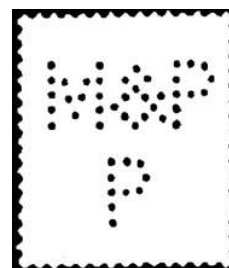
I used to work for the engineering firm of Mather & Platt Ltd. Fire Protection, Pump and Textile Engineers. Manchester, and for the majority of the post, Pitney Bowes or Roneo meters were used. The Post Room however used to keep a small quantity of the most used low value postage stamps on hand for late mail that had missed the afternoon collection. To prevent misuse, the stamps were perforated with M&P/M, M&P/P and M&P/R.



M4540.01



M4560.01



M4560.01a

The best information that I have of the use of these dies is as follows:

1. The 'M&P/M' die was originally intended for use at (a) Salford Ironworks, Manchester and (b) at Gorton Tank, Manchester. It was generally thought that the 'M' indicated 'Manchester' but not so; it was for 'Miles Platting', the district in which the Head Office and Main Works were situated.
2. It was used until stamp stocks ran out and then the 'M&P/P' was introduced for Park Works, Newton Heath, Miles Platting, Manchester. Salford Ironworks had closed about the time of WWI. Gorton Tank was still operative in 1990 when I retired but "winding down" as the need for large pressure vessels decreased.
3. 'M&P/R' was, I believe, used at Radcliffe until the closure of the works in the early 90's. They had their own Post Room but whether the stamps were purchased centrally and perforated at Park Works or purchased locally I do not know. The two works were about 12/14 miles apart. I am sure that this die did exist.
[Ed: Alan reports the use of this die but it has not been reported in our catalogue. Could I ask members to have a look at their collection and check whether they might have a copy of this die.]

4. The correct addresses for each firm was:
- a. Salford Ironworks. (Mather & Platt Ltd.), Salford, Manchester.
 - b. Gorton Tank Ltd. (Mather & Platt Ltd.), Gorton, Manchester
 - c. Mather & Platt Ltd. Park Works, Newton Heath, Miles Plating, Manchester.
 - d. Mather & Platt Ltd, Radcliffe Works, Radcliffe New Road, Radcliffe, Manchester.



Sir William Mather
1838-1920 head of
Mather & Platt

During a conversation one day with the Tool Room Foreman and the Works Director, it transpired that to save time and reduce costs, many years previously, some time in the 1930s, the Tool Room had made a perforating machine for the Post Room. The machine was kept in the office of the Works Director until required to perforate a new consignment of stamps. The sheets of stamps were folded into quarters and then perforated, this meant that some perforations were upside down, some back to front and some the correct way. The Tool Room Foreman said that it had been no big deal to make the perforator, one Saturday morning had sufficed because it was a straightforward task that could have been left to a senior apprentice. When I asked the present whereabouts of the machine in the late 1990s, I was told that it had recently been kept in the firm's strong room for safety. Now that the works and the old offices have been demolished and I have retired, I have no idea what eventually happened to it. Most of the people concerned have long since passed away.

Die 4560.01a is listed in the catalogue with postmarks of Rochdale, Hyde and Droylsden. These postmarks could well be because late post may have been taken by someone and posted locally on their way home from work. In the normal course of events, the Newton Street Sorting Office in central Manchester collected and handled the firm's mail and this would have Manchester postmark. Between the wars, it is possible that it would have had an 'Openshaw' Manchester postmark, as that office handled a lot of the East Manchester postings.